100X | WORKFORCE

SALARY GUIDE 2026

Legal

What legal professionals are asking to be paid, why they're looking, where they'll work, and how to hire them before you need them.

$85K
Typical ask for a Paralegal

21%
Are looking for growth or a next step

74%
Would work hybrid

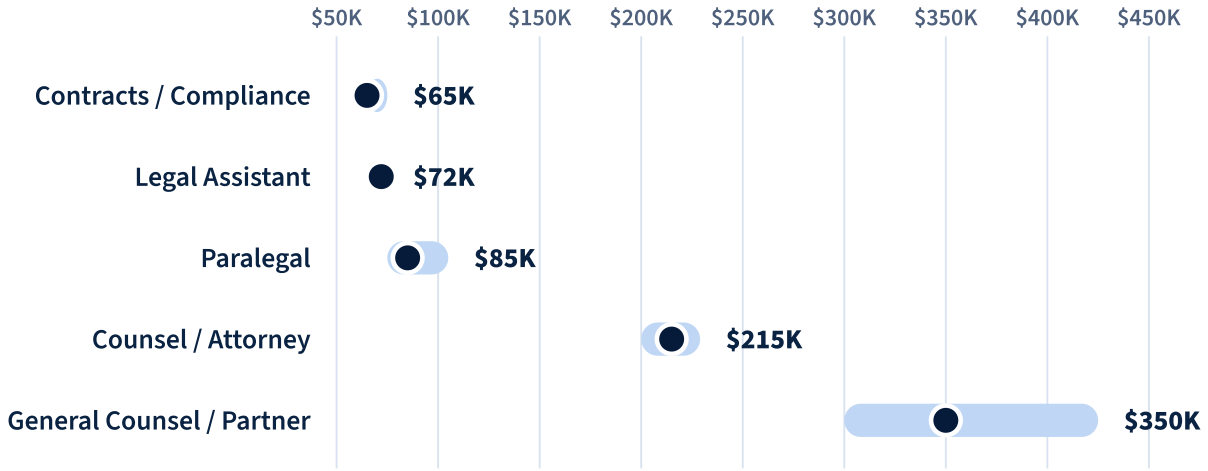
144
Candidates behind this guide

Built from 144 NorthPoint Search Group candidate questionnaires and job applications (January 2025 – October 2026) and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

PAY

What they're asking to be paid

Desired base salary, from 64 candidates who told us what they want in their next role. The bar is the middle half of answers. The dot is the typical ask (the median).



The lowest salary people say they'd accept sits close to what they ask for. A Paralegal asking $85K says the floor is about $76.5K. There isn't much room to come in low.

TITLE	ANSWERS	MIDDLE HALF	TYPICAL ASK	LOWEST THEY'D TAKE
Contracts / Compliance	5	$65K – $75K	**$65K**	—
Legal Assistant / Secretary	5	$70K – $75K	**$72K**	—
Paralegal	39	$75K – $105K	**$85K**	$76.5K
Counsel / Attorney	10	$200K – $229K	**$215K**	—
General Counsel / Partner	5	$300K – $425K	**$350K**	—

Government numbers for comparison

Median annual pay, metro Atlanta, May 2025 (BLS). These include every experience level, so they can run lower than what experienced candidates ask for.

Lawyers	**$138,210**
Compliance officers	**$72,810**
Paralegals and legal assistants	**$64,080**
Legal secretaries	**$60,100**

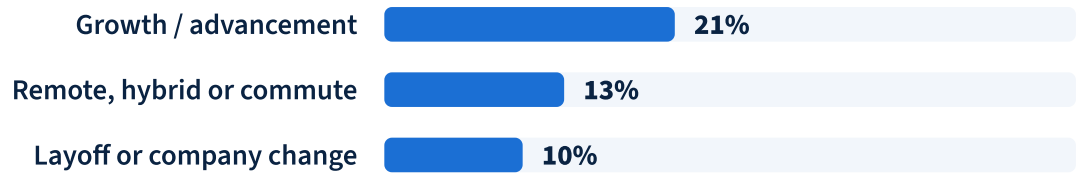
How to read this

Asking pay is base salary only, before bonus and benefits. Titles with fewer than 5 answers aren't shown. About 33% of candidates who gave a location are in Georgia; the rest are spread across the U.S. General Counsel asks come from our General Counsel application, which asks for ideal pay including bonus.

WHY THEY MOVE

They want a next step

Why they're looking, from 52 candidates who answered in their own words.
Many gave more than one reason, so the bars add up to more than 100%.



> 21% are looking for growth or a next step. Pay barely comes up. 10% are on the market because of a layoff or a change at their company, so good people are available right now.

WHERE THEY'LL WORK

Hybrid is the sweet spot

From 47 candidates. They could pick every setup they'd accept.

> 74% would work hybrid and 68% would work fully in the office. You don't need a fully remote job to compete.

TURNOVER

How often people leave

Departures per 100 jobs in a year (all separations, 2025), from the BLS Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey.

How long people stay

Median years with their current employer, January 2026 (BLS).

Legal occupations	**4.3 years**
All occupations	**4.1 years**

What that means for a team of 10

At professional services employers, a 10-person legal team sees 5 or 6 departures a year. At the average private employer it's about 4. Either way, most of those openings are predictable.

A year is 12 times the average monthly rate. It counts departures, so one seat can turn over more than once.

WHAT TO DO

Five ways to hire better this year

1. **Price to the ask.**
   Put the middle-half range for the role in your job post. Candidates' floor is close to their ask, so low offers lose people.

2. **Sell the path, not just the pay.**
   21% are looking for growth. Show the next title, who they'll learn from, and what they'll own.

3. **Offer hybrid.**
   74% will work hybrid.

4. **Screen for your system.**
   Ask about your practice-management and e-filing systems up front. Train the rest.

5. **Build the bench before you need it.**
   Turnover is predictable. Keep a short list of ready people behind every seat so the next resignation is a phone call, not a crisis.

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METHOD AND SOURCES

Pay, reasons, work setup and software come from screening questionnaires and job applications that candidates completed for NorthPoint Search Group between January 16, 2025 and October 20, 2026: 144 people, newest form per person. Pay figures are desired base salary for the titles shown; the middle half is the 25th to 75th percentile, rounded to $500. Groups with fewer than 5 answers are left out, and no individual answer is shown.

- BLS Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, 2025 annual averages (released March 13, 2026), Tables 20 and 22.
- BLS Employee Tenure, median years with current employer by occupation, January 2026, Table 6.
- BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, May 2025, Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA.